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SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND IPA, NSC FOR
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SUBJECT: PA PLANS FOR HEBRON DEPLOYMENT

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) PM Salam Fayyad told the Consul General October 6 that the GOI has approved a deployment of PA security forces (PASF) to Hebron on/about October 17. National Security Forces (NSF) commander MG Thiab Ali (Abu al-Fatah) told PolOff/PolFSN October 7 that the PA submitted a request to IDF Central Command chief MG Gadi Shamni for deployment of 450 NSF and Presidential Guard (PG) soldiers to the Hebron area. Other security contacts suggest that the PA expects that the GOI will clear about 150 for deployment.

12. (C) MG Ali said the deployment's purpose is to allow a general security operation in the Hebron area, which he said is a Hamas stronghold, to disrupt Hamas activities, reduce crime, and establish a visible PA presence in case Hamas decides to undermine the PA. MG Ali noted that Hamas claims that PA President Mahmud Abbas' term ends in January and may attempt protests before the end of the year. MG Ali said the NSF has thoroughly briefed its plans to the IDF, which he said has agreed in principle to the deployment, subject to approval of specific operational parameters, at both the Central Command and Hebron Brigade level. He added that the NSF has completed logistical preparations and will be ready to move whenever the IDF gives final clearance.

Comment

13. (C) Hebron Governorate, the West Bank's most populous district, suffers from poverty and religious extremism more than most other areas of the West Bank, and has been fertile ground for Hamas' recruitment of political and militant support. PA security commanders have consistently rated Hebron as the PA's top threat area, but sensitivities regarding settlements and holy places in Hebron complicate PA-GOI security cooperation efforts there.

WALLES